

***Army Residential Communities Initiative
Draft Finding of No Significant Impact
Forts Eustis, Story, and Monroe, Virginia***

Pursuant to regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (Title 40 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* [CFR] Parts 1500–1508) and the Army (32 CFR Part 651) for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), Forts Eustis, Story, and Monroe, Virginia, conducted an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the potential environmental and socioeconomic effects associated with implementing a Community Development and Management Plan (CDMP) at the installations under the Army's Residential Communities Initiative (RCI).

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to improve military family housing at Forts Eustis, Story, and Monroe. Many of the housing units on the installations are substantially below acceptable standards in terms of size, configuration, safety, condition, services, and amenities with respect to contemporary standards of livability and comparable housing in the surrounding community. The military housing has approximately a \$15–20 million backlog of maintenance and repair, which generally increases each year due to the age of the housing and a shortfall of funding. The proposed action is needed at the installations to provide affordable, quality housing and ancillary supporting facilities to soldiers and their families. This would be accomplished by improving existing family housing and by addressing the present deficit in the number of available family housing units on the installation.

Proposed Action

Consistent with authorities contained in the 1996 Military Housing Privatization Initiative, Forts Eustis, Story, and Monroe, Virginia, propose to transfer responsibility for providing housing and ancillary supporting facilities to Forts Eustis, Story, and Monroe Family Housing, LLC (FESMFH), a private developer. The three installations worked jointly with FESMFH to develop a CDMP to implement the RCI at the installations.

In accordance with the CDMP, Forts Eustis, Story, and Monroe propose to convey 1,504 existing dwelling units in 13 housing areas to FESMFH and to provide FESMFH with a 50-year land lease of approximately 316 acres. In addition, the installations would provide a 50-year land lease of approximately 141 acres of post property on which FESMFH plans to construct new family housing units and ancillary supporting facilities. Total acreage to be leased would be approximately 457 acres.

Under the CDMP, FESMFH would decrease the on-post-housing inventory on the three installations by more than 100 units to provide an end state inventory of 1,396 units; revise the mix of family housing to better meet current soldier family requirements; address the housing deficit in three- and four-bedroom units; renovate and improve retained units; and provide landscaping improvements, parks, and playgrounds. FESMFH plans to construct 1,212 new units, demolish 1,317 units, and renovate 1 existing unit. Development would occur in housing villages on Fort Eustis, the 300 and 400 housing areas and 700 area on Fort Story, and the Wherry housing areas and non-Wherry historic housing on Fort Monroe, as well as some undeveloped areas adjacent to these housing complexes. Implementation also would require that FESMFH operate and maintain all family housing for a period of 50 years, as well as construct, operate, and maintain ancillary supporting facilities.

Alternatives Considered

Alternatives to the proposed action that were considered were: a partial privatization alternative, a private sector reliance alternative, and leasing alternatives. Those alternatives were considered unreasonable or unfeasible and therefore were not further evaluated. As prescribed by CEQ regulations, the EA also evaluated the no action alternative, which would consist of the Army's continuing to provide for the family housing needs of its personnel through use of traditional military construction and maintenance funding obtained through the Congressional authorization and appropriations process.

Factors Considered in Determining That No Environmental Impact Statement Is Required

The EA, which is attached and incorporated by reference into this Finding of No Significant Impact, examined the potential effects of the proposed action and the no action alternative on 12 resource areas and areas of environmental and socioeconomic concern: land use, aesthetics and visual resources, air quality, noise, geology and soils, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics (including environmental justice and protection of children), transportation, utilities, and hazardous and toxic substances.

Implementation of the proposed action would result in a combination of minor short-term and long-term adverse and beneficial effects. There would be long-term beneficial effects on land use; short- and long-term adverse and beneficial effects on aesthetics and visual resources and water resources; short-term adverse effects on air quality, noise, and geology and soils; short- and long-term adverse effects on biological resources and utilities; short-term adverse and beneficial effects and long-term beneficial effects on socioeconomics; and short-term adverse and long-term beneficial effects on hazardous wastes and toxic substances. There would also be the potential for long-term minor adverse effects on cultural resources if archeological resources were found on construction sites and as housing units reach 50 years of age during the life of the action.

Cumulative effects from implementing the proposed action would produce short-term adverse effects and long-term adverse and beneficial effects. The effects would result from concurrent construction activities taking place on Forts Eustis, Story, and Monroe.

Mitigation actions pertain to landscaping materials; air quality; noise controls, energy conservation; preservation of vegetation; soils and surface waters protection; preservation of archeological resources potentially discoverable during site preparations; protection of children; and control of hazardous and toxic substances during construction. Mitigation measures included in the CDMP are enforceable as essential elements of the contract defining the parties' obligations for carrying out the RCI project on Forts Eustis, Story, and Monroe.

Conclusion

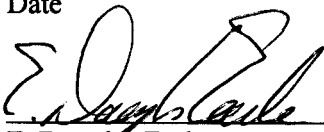
Based on the EA, it has been determined that implementation of the proposed action will have no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on the quality of the natural or human environment. Because no significant environmental impacts will result from implementation of the proposed action, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required and will not be prepared and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) will be prepared in accordance with the Army's NEPA regulation.

Public Comment

The EA and Draft FNSI are available for review and comment for 30 days, beginning June 20, 2003 through July 20, 2003. Copies of the EA and Draft FNSI are available on the Internet at <http://www.eustis.army.mil> or <http://fort.monroe.army.mil/monroe>. Copies also have been provided to the following local libraries—Grissom Library, Newport News, Virginia; Central Library, Virginia Beach, Virginia; and Phoebus Branch Library, Hampton, Virginia. Comments should be addressed to Mr. Richard Muller, US Army Corps of Engineers, Norfolk District, Attn: CENAO-PM-E, 803 Front Street, Norfolk, Virginia 23510-1096 (Email: richard.j.muller@usace.army.mil). Comments must be received by 4:30 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time, July 20, 2003.

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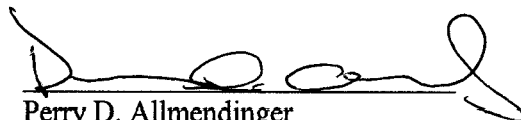
Date



E. Douglas Earle
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Garrison Commander
Forts Eustis and Story

16 JUNE 03

Date



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